

Voice Record (Cull Stacey) [Textual Transcription]

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RECORD 4

3524

Made in Cross City, Florida Turpentine Camp.

A-1 “What is your name?”

“Cull Stacy.”

“How Old are you?”

“I am fifty-six.”

“Where were you born?”

“I was born in Richmond Parrish, North Carolina.”

“What song will you sing?”

“A turpentine worker's song.”

“What is the Title?”

“ I am going to Georgia to work in de Turpentine. ”

“Where did you first hear this song?”

“When I was a small boy.”

“You got it from the turpentiners?”

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"Directly."

"You heard it and picked it up?"

"I heard 'em sing."

"Now you go ahead and tell me your history."

"When I first landed in Georgia I came to Berrier County.

Den I went back to Bulloch County and came to a mill station called a 'camp'."

"Can you hum the tune?"

"All right, I do that — anything you want. Anything atall to help the government. I stayed there a few months and go to Cumberland, Georgia, and went to work in a camp run by McMullen Brothers. They 2 were Commission men."

"Do you think that is where you learned the song? I understand the incidents actually happened?"

"The turpentiners made up the song. The people from a West Indies Plantation, they used to come up and work by the day. I was goin' to write a man, but did not know just where to find him — but that's where the song was composed."

"You say this song was widely known?"

"Not now."

"In other words, you are the only one to sing it now?" Interviewer's Notes: Cull Stacey said, off the record, "I'm tryin ta study-up the song now. It's called I'm goin to Georgy' an it was sung by the old time Calina niggers. Even if I study it up, I kaint sing it. I sing like a bumble bee... Man, I kaint drink no gin. I don't drink gin — I'm a high class nigger. I drinks Rye.

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I like beer — I'm a Budweiser man; I don't drink no beer but Budweiser. If I get a coupla bottles of that in my belly I'll even preach you a sermon. The Government oughta put me ta goin roun ta turpentine camps makin speeches; I knows more bout turpentine than any of these young niggers. These Florida niggers didn't know nothing atall bout it till we come down here from Georgy an larned em."

A-2 I'M GOIN TO GEORGIA

(Turpentine Song)

As remembered by Cull Stacey:

I'm goin ta Georgy ta work in the turpentine When I got in Georgy, I didn't have long to stay, I got in debt an hadta run away.

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I'm goin ta Georgy ta work in the turpentine. When I got in Georgy I begin to fret, The Boss Man tole me I was in debt, Goin ta Georgy ta work in the turpentine.

I got to a lime sink an decided ta stop. The white man tole me if I find the buttin line I would have ta git up an trot. The woodsman went to the Boss Man an begin ta fret, He says the hand left in debt. The woods rider caught me an brought me back, He said if you don't work I'll beat your back!

(He remembered other fragmentary parts such as:) The Boss Man tole me, 'Nigger, ya got yoursefe in debt.'

When I got in Georgy, I heered a lion sing.

"Thank you, very much, I am sure this is going to be a very interesting record."

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"That was original. It was sung forty years ago. Civilization follows the work, and there is no money there now, I came into Georgia when I was about sixteen. New people were coming in then. My work, I tapped the tree. I have always worked in the turpentine — grew up with it."

"Thank you, very much. You told me you knew a story, not a fairy story, but a good story."

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"Mr. President in Washington will want to hear it. A man told me I ought to get paid by the government."

A-3

POTATO STORY

"A man went out and he picked potatoes. He had fried Potatoes, and he had sweet potatoes, and he had 'tater crackers, and he had potato pie. 'Way in the night the man's brother heard him talking about his pains, and he called his wife and said — 'This man's come in here has got the bellyache' — and she said I'll come right up and make him some 'tater tea'."

A-4

KEROSENE CHARLEY and THE CHICKEN ROOST

Well, I got another story. "A man went on a visit about thirty miles away. When he got there he asked for a bed. They had two grown daughters, and they was in one bed, and the man and his wife, they were in another bed, and there was no other bed. The woman said 'I will make you a pallet.' The man said — 'I never had a pallet before.' So he was put on a pallet on the floor, and away in the night wet was hittin' him in the face. He says —

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'The house is leakin' and they's somethin' wet a-hittin' me in the face.' The other man says — 'You fool! Don't you know you are sleepin under a chicken roost?'

"Where did you learn this story?"

"I come from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I have crossed the entire United States."

"You traveled when you were a young man?"

"I first went to a coal mine when there was a strike. Joe Brown come along and we got there when there was a strike, in 1897. You 5 see I did not know there was a strike. They told me if I was a Union man I could work. I told the man I did not know the strike was on, the soldiers were there and you had to work under a gun."

How long since you came back?"

"I been here since Hoover was elected. Hoover stopped my car, and here I am anchored."

In the course of the interview, Cull Stacey said, "If you Government men can do us any good up there in Washington we sure will appreciate it. Tell em we ain gittin our chops down here. You tell Claude Pepper if he kaint do no better for us than he's doin, to come on back home an plead the law, and let me go up yonder!" Stetson Kennedy, interviewing, asked, "Say that again, Stacey, so we can get it on the record." Bob Cook, operating, objected. The three white woodsriders present made no comment. Stacey first came forward to repeat his statements for the record, then suddenly backed away, saying, "Oh no! I'm smarter than you think I is. I know bettern ta say anything against the Government!"

One of the white woodsriders asked, "Where is that colored girl, Zora Hurston, who was here? She was a pretty smart nigger. I took one look at her and sized her up to be bout

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two thirds white. She was watchin a bunch a young folks drinkin and cuttin up, an she says ta me 'They'll be sorry when they get your age.' She's sure right about that!"